

The Harington Scheme

Mobile Devices and Responsible Use Policy

1. Purpose

Harington is committed to providing a safe, inclusive and purposeful learning environment where all students are able to engage fully in education whilst developing the independence and self-management skills needed for adulthood.

Mobile phones and other personal digital devices can support communication, independence, travel, accessibility and safety. However, they can also distract from learning, affect wellbeing and social interaction, compromise privacy and create safeguarding risks.

This policy sets out how mobile devices may be used responsibly across Harington. It aims to:

- maximise engagement in learning.
- minimise distractions.
- promote positive relationships.
- safeguard students and staff.
- support preparation for adulthood through responsible digital behaviour.
- ensure reasonable adjustments are made for students who require mobile devices as part of their support arrangements.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all students, staff, volunteers, contractors and visitors while they are participating in Harington activities or representing the college. The policy applies in all learning environments, including:

- on the Harington sites;
- during work experience and Supported Internship placements;
- during community-based learning and educational visits;
- during travel training; and
- during any other activity organised or supervised by Harington.

The expectations for the use of mobile devices may differ depending on the learning environment. In particular, different arrangements may apply during off-site learning activities to support students' safety, communication, independence and preparation for adulthood.

These arrangements are set out in Section 5 of this policy.

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3. Principles

Harington recognises that mobile devices can be both valuable learning tools and significant distractions. Our approach is based upon five principles.

Learning comes first- Students should be fully engaged in learning without unnecessary interruption from personal devices.

Inclusion- Students who require mobile devices for medical, communication or accessibility reasons will always receive appropriate reasonable adjustments.

Preparation for Adulthood- Students need opportunities to learn how to use technology responsibly rather than simply having it removed.

Safeguarding- Mobile devices must never compromise the safety, dignity or privacy of students or staff.

Consistency- Expectations should be clear, proportionate and applied consistently by all staff.

4. Student Expectations

Students may bring mobile phones and personal digital devices into Harington. During taught sessions, tutorials, enrichment activities and structured learning:

- phones should be switched to silent.
- phones should be placed in the storage cabinet.
- Phones should only be used when permission has been given for learning activities or where an agreed exemption applies.

Students must never:

- film or photograph others without permission.
- record staff or students without consent.
- use phones, in any way, to bully, intimidate or harass others.
- access inappropriate material.
- disrupt learning through messaging, gaming, watching 'content' or social media.

5. Reasonable Adjustments and Exemptions

The expectations for the use of mobile devices vary depending on the learning environment. Harington recognises that, whilst mobile phones can support communication, safety and independence, they can also distract from learning and reduce opportunities for students to develop the confidence and self-management skills needed for adulthood.

5.1 On-site Learning

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During lessons and other structured learning activities on the Harington campus, students are expected to keep mobile phones switched to silent and out of sight unless a member of staff has authorised their use for a specific learning activity or an agreed individual adjustment applies.

Students may use their mobile phones during designated break and lunch times where exemptions apply. However, students are encouraged to engage with their peers, participate in college life and develop their independence. Routine contact with parents or carers during the college day should be avoided unless there is an urgent or exceptional reason.

5.2 Off-site Learning

This policy continues to apply during all off-site activities, including Supported Internships, work experience placements, community-based learning, educational visits and travel training. Recognising that mobile devices are an important tool for developing independence and ensuring personal safety, students will normally be permitted to carry and use their mobile phones where appropriate to:

- communicate with Harington staff or placement supervisors;
- access maps, journey planning and travel information;
- use digital travel tickets or payment methods;
- respond to emergencies; and
- support independent travel and preparation for adulthood.

Whilst off site, students should not routinely contact parents or carers during the learning day unless there is an urgent or exceptional need. Where support is required, students should speak to the member of Harington staff supervising the activity or placement in the first instance.

Students must use their devices responsibly and follow any instructions provided by Harington staff or placement supervisors. Mobile phone use must not interfere with learning, workplace expectations, health and safety, or the privacy and dignity of others.

5.3 Individual Reasonable Adjustments

Harington is committed to ensuring that this policy is implemented in an inclusive and equitable way. Where a student requires access to a mobile device because of an identified medical, communication or accessibility need, appropriate reasonable adjustments will be made.

Examples may include:

- continuous medical monitoring applications;
- assistive communication technology or Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC);
- accessibility applications or software; and
- other agreed adjustments identified through the student's individual support arrangements.

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Any agreed adjustment will be documented within the student's EHCP, Working With and/or Risk Assessment, as appropriate, and communicated to relevant staff to ensure a consistent approach.

5.4 Communication with Parents and Carers

Harington encourages students to develop increasing independence and confidence in managing their own day-to-day activities as part of their preparation for adulthood. Routine communication between students and parents or carers during the college day should be avoided unless there is an urgent or exceptional reason.

Parents and carers who need to contact a student during the college day should do so through the college's main reception and/or the Duty phone. Messages will be passed to the student promptly where appropriate. Similarly, where a student needs to contact a parent or carer during the college day, this should normally be arranged through a member of staff.

This approach helps to:

- minimise disruption to learning;
- promote independence and resilience;
- enable staff to provide appropriate support where required;
- ensure safeguarding and welfare concerns are managed appropriately; and
- prepare students for the expectations of employment and adult life, where routine contact with family during the working day is generally not expected.

6. Learning Activities

Staff may ask students to use mobile devices where they enhance learning.

Examples include:

- photography
- QR codes
- research
- accessibility tools
- community access
- travel training
- communication software
- digital portfolios.

When activities are complete, devices should again be put away unless instructed otherwise.

7. Safeguarding

The misuse of mobile devices can present significant safeguarding risks for students, staff and visitors. Harington is committed to creating a safe learning environment in which everyone is

treated with dignity and respect. All users of mobile devices are expected to use them responsibly and in a manner that protects the privacy, wellbeing and safety of others. Students must not use mobile devices to photograph, film or record other students, staff or visitors without their knowledge and explicit consent. Images, videos or recordings taken on college premises or during Harington activities must not be uploaded to social media or shared electronically unless authorised by the college. Students must not livestream activities, share confidential or personal information, or use mobile devices to access, store or distribute harmful, offensive, illegal or inappropriate material.

Any misuse of a mobile device will be addressed promptly and proportionately in accordance with the college's **Safeguarding Policy, Behaviour Policy, Online Safety Policy and Acceptable Use Agreement**. Where appropriate, the college may confiscate a device as part of an investigation, in line with college procedures and relevant legislation.

Serious breaches of this policy, particularly those involving safeguarding concerns, bullying, harassment, the sharing of indecent or illegal material, or criminal activity, may result in disciplinary action and referral to parents or carers, external agencies, the police or other relevant authorities, where appropriate.

8. Staff Use of Mobile Devices

Staff are expected to model the responsible and professional use of mobile devices at all times. The standards expected of staff should reinforce the expectations placed on students and contribute to a positive learning environment.

The use of personal mobile phones whilst working directly with students is strictly prohibited. Personal devices must not be used during teaching, learning support, supervision, work experience, Supported Internships, educational visits, community activities or any other activity involving students, except where their use is necessary for an emergency or has been authorised for operational or safeguarding purposes.

Staff may use their personal mobile phones during their designated breaks, provided this does not impact on their professional responsibilities or the supervision of students. Staff may retain access to mobile phones during educational visits, Supported Internships, community activities, lone working, emergencies and safeguarding incidents where this is necessary to ensure effective communication, respond to incidents or maintain the safety and wellbeing of students and staff.

Staff should never use personal mobile devices to photograph, video or record students unless this has been explicitly authorised in accordance with college procedures. Where images or recordings are required for educational, promotional or safeguarding purposes, only approved college procedures and devices should be used.

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Wherever possible, staff should use college-issued devices for operational communication. Where this is not possible, the use of a personal mobile phone must be limited to legitimate college business and comply with the college's safeguarding, data protection and information security policies.

9. Parents and Carers

Harington values the important role that parents and carers play in supporting their young person's education, wellbeing and development. We ask parents and carers to work in partnership with Harington to promote the responsible use of mobile devices and to support students in developing the independence and self-management skills needed for adult life. Parents and carers are encouraged to discuss appropriate mobile phone use with their young person and reinforce the expectations set out in this policy. To minimise disruption to learning and encourage independence, parents and carers should avoid contacting students directly during the college day unless there is an urgent or exceptional reason to do so. Where a parent or carer needs to contact a student during the college day, they should do so via the Harington's main reception, where messages will be passed on promptly where appropriate. Parents and carers should also inform Harington if their young person requires access to a mobile device for a medical, communication or accessibility need. This will enable the college to consider and implement any reasonable adjustments required to support the student's health, safety and learning. Working together in this way helps to ensure that mobile devices are used safely, appropriately and in a manner that supports students' learning, wellbeing and preparation for adulthood.

10. Managing Concerns

Where students do not follow this policy, staff will respond proportionately.

Responses may include:

- a reminder of expectations
- requesting the phone to be handed in.
- restorative conversations
- Positive Behaviour Support strategies
- temporary removal of the device until the end of the session where appropriate
- contact with parents or carers where concerns persist.

Harington will always seek to understand whether any underlying SEND, medical or emotional need contributed to the behaviour before considering further action.

11. Roles and Responsibilities

Students

Students are responsible for using mobile devices safely, respectfully and in accordance with this policy.

Staff

Staff are responsible for implementing the policy consistently, making agreed reasonable adjustments and modelling positive digital behaviour.

Managers

Managers will support staff in applying the policy consistently and ensure reasonable adjustments are implemented appropriately.

Parents and Carers

Parents and carers should work in partnership with the college to promote responsible use.

12. Monitoring and Review

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored through:

- student feedback
- staff feedback
- safeguarding records
- behaviour records
- lesson observations
- student engagement
- complaints and incidents relating to mobile devices.

The policy will be reviewed annually or sooner should legislation or operational practice change.